

Message Text

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ACTION INRD-08

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R T E X T

3.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV,/ PORG, NI, NG
SIOJECT: FONMIN DISCUSSES OFFICIAL VISIT BY NIGERIAN CHIEF OF
STATE

SUMMARY: OBASANJO ACCOMPANIED BY UNUSUALLY LARGE, HIGH-LEVEL
DELEGATION VISITED NIGER JULY 17 AND 18. GON PUBLICIZED VISIT
AS NORMAL AND DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED BUT PRIVATELY ADMITTED TO
COMMONALITY OF POLITICAL CONCERNS AS WELL AS EXISTENCE OF MAJOR
IRRITANT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. NIGERIA WANTS NIGER TO RELINQUISH
ITS OAU BACKED CONDIDACY FOR SUCURITY COUNCIL SEAT.

1. ON JULY 19 I MET WITH FONMIN DJERMAKOYE AFTER VISIT OF
NIGERIAN CHIEF OF STATE. OBASANJO ANRIVED WITH UNUSUALLY
TOP HEAVY DELEGATAION WHICH INCLUDED COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS GARBA, (COMMISSIONER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WAS
SCHEDULED BUT COULD NOT COME BECAUSE OF CONFLICT WITH ECOWAS
MEETING)COMMISSIONER FOR MINES AND POWER, GOVERNOR OF KANO
STATE, GOVERNOR OF SOLOTO STATE AND OTHER FUNCTIONARIES.
DJERMAKOYE PROTESTED THAT I WAS QUITE NORMAL THAT TWO
COUNTRIES, DISPARATE IN SIZE AND POWER, BUT SHARING COMMON
BORDERS, COMMON PEOPLES, COMMON RELIGIONS SHOULD MEET AT SUCH
A LEVEL TO DISCUSS COMMON CONCERNS (THE SAME LINE APPEARED
IN LE SAHEL). HE EMPHASIZED DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF MEETINGS,
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COMMENTING THAT NIGERIA IS ONLY COUNTRY WITH WHICH NIGER HAS
MIXED COMMISSION AND THAT DISCUSSION HAD FOCUSSED ONPROJECTS
OF COMMISSION. FONMIN POINTED OUT THAT NIGER IS SMALL AND
POOR BUT THAT NIGERIA, DESPITE ITS SIZE AND WEALTH, HAS PROBLEMS
OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND IN FACT HAS SOME PROBLEMS THAT NIGER
DOES NOT SHARE, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS INTERNAL. WITH KNOWING
LOOK HE INTONED QTE NIGERIA IS A FEDERATION, THAT IS ITS WEAKNESS.

UNQUOTE

2. INWHAT AT TIMES APPERAED TO BE STRANGE SHIFT IN CONVERSATION, DJERMAKOYE SUDDENLY MENTIONED NOTE THAT WE HAD PRESENTED TO GSF IN RESPONSE TO GON REQUEST FOR SUPPORT OF ITS CONDIDACY FOR SECURITY COUNCIL SST. OUR NOTE, WHICH WAS DELIVERED PRIOR TO OAU MEETING, SET OUT US POLICY OF WITHHOLDING COMMITMENTS TO CANDIDATE COUNTRIES UNTIL THERE IS REGINAL SUPPORT. THEN RERMAKOYE VOLUNTEERED THAT NIGERIANS HAD ANNOUNCED THAT THEY HAD NL ABANDONED THEIR CANDIDACY FOR SEAT ON SECURITY COUNCILM NIGERIA WOULD LIKE NIGER TO WITHDRAW ITS OAU-ENDORSED CANDIDACY BUT NIGER TOOK POSITION THAT ISSUE WAS NOT BETWEEN NIGERIA AND NIGER BUT BETWEEN NIGERIA AND OAU. OAU HAD MADE CHOICE AND NIGER IS NOT AT LIBERTY TOO DISREGARD THAT DECISION. WITH SOME EMPHASIS, HE POINTED OUT THAT OAU DECISION HAD BEEN COUCHED IN AN UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION IN SPITE OF EARLIER NIGERIAN RESER- BATION ABOUT NIGER CANDIDACY. JKERMAKOYE DESCRIBED THIS AS QTE BER DELICATE AND VERY SERIOUS UNQTE SITUATION AND WITH GRIMACE PAINTED SCENARIO OF POSSIBLE NIGERIA CAMPAIGN AMONG MUTUAL FRIENDS AND OAU MEMBERS TO CONVINCE THEM THAT NIGERIA IS BETTER SUITED THAN NIGER TO REPRESENT AFRICA IN SECURITY COUNCIL. PRINCIPAL FOCUS WOULD BE ON COMPARATIVE POPULATION SIZE. HE FORESEES PERMANENTLY DEVASTATING CONSE- QUENCES FOR OAU IF NIGERIA MOUNTS SUCH CAMPAIGN. HE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT NIGERIA WILL DO. HE MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF CONFRONTATION AT GENERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSEMBLY OR EFFORT TO AMEND UN CHARTER WHICH HE THINKS WOULD BE DOOMED TO FAILURE.HE PROBED THIS TUNNEL FOR SOME SMALL LIGHT WHICH HE FOUND AND MAGNIFIED IN HIS COMMENT:QTE I THINK ABASANJO IS A VERY WISE MAN. UNQTE

3. COMMENT: IT IS APPARENT THAT NIGERIANS ARE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT SECURITY COUNCIL AND IT SEEMS ALSO APPARENT THAT OBASANJO MADE THIS UNUSUAL TRIP TO TAKE MEASURE OF HIS LITTLE BROTHER AND PERHAPS IN SPIRIT OF COOPERATION, AMITY AND FLATTERY TO MAXIMIZE FRIENDLY PERSUASION. THE QUESTION IS WHAT IF THIS DOES NOT WORK? NOGER GOVERNMENT IS WEIGHING ITS OPTIONS BUT AT PRESENT APPEARS WILLING TO LET NIGERIA DECIDE HOW IT IS GOING TO HANDLDUTHIS BALL WHICH COULD BECOME HOT POTATO. WHETHER OR NOT NIGER BELIEVES THAT THIS VISIT WAS QUITE QTE NORMAL UNQTE IS IMMATERIAL, IT HAS ENJOYED FLATTERING AND UNUSUAL ATTENTION OF BIG BROTHER WHICH CANNOT ESCAPE ATTENTION OF REST OF AFRICA, THE WORLD, NOR OF NOGER'S SUBSTANTIAL HAUSA POPULATION. IN ADDITION NIGER MAY HAVE RECEIVED PROMISE OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. THIS WAS HEADY TRIP AND NIGER MAY HAVE A HANGOVER AND NIGERIA A HEADACHE.

4. FOR DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS OAU COLLECTIVE. JAMES

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TAGS: PGOV, PORG, OVIP, PDIP, NI, NG, US, OAU
To: STATE AF
Type: TE
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